

## 35 Day Challenge

### Celebration and Challenge – Jim Burgen

October 17, 2021

#### Group Creed

We come together as a Group with the goal of Spiritual Formation--encouraging one another to become the same kind of person that Jesus is, so that we can live out every part of our lives inside of His Kingdom.

#### // Bible References

Matthew chapters 5, 6 and 7; Galatians 5:7; Philippians 3:12.

#### // Message Summary

This week's message from Pastor Jim Burgen is the culmination of our 35 Day Challenge. In the previous six weeks, we have pushed ourselves to engage each day in 15 minutes of exercise, read one chapter of the Bible, intentionally pray, serve someone else and sacrifice a thing of value to us. For those of us who completed the 35 day challenge - well done! You spent 35 days faithfully and obediently running after God. For those of us who haven't completed it, let's think about *why*. Did we get frustrated with a lack of success? Or forgetful under the weight of all else that vies for our attention? Or did we just not see the benefit? Whatever the reason, the reality is that as Christians - followers of Christ - our lives are meant to be built on three spiritual ventures: knowing God's word and applying it, adjusting our priorities to align with His values, and serving others. The 35 Day Challenge was designed to help us remember the daily pace and routine our spiritual lives need to be fully alive.

#### // Biblical and Historical Context

Pastor Jim referenced Paul's letter to the Philippians when he said, 'I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus' (3:14). Paul likely wrote this letter to the church in Philippi around the year AD 60 (making it surprisingly uplifting and joyful given that he wrote it from a Roman prison cell). Despite his external circumstances, the dominant theme of Paul's message to this church is to relentlessly pursue Christlikeness. To communicate this, he uses the analogy of a runner who enthusiastically and energetically expends all they have in a dogged commitment to winning their event. Such a runner does not allow disappointment, depletion or distraction to prevent their progress.

Rather their focus is steadfastly upon the winner's prize, and they discipline both their mind and body to make the prize their own. Paul's message to the church in Philippi parallels Jim's message to our church: practice those things that will help you win the spiritual race.

## // Community Questions

1. Who finished the 35 Day Challenge? (Stand up, take a bow!)
2. Has anyone competed in a running event? If yes, why did you do it and what kind of commitment did it require for you to be successful?

## // Discussion Questions

1. As a group, read Philippians 3:12-14. What do you notice? What questions does it raise for you?
2. Paul says that he presses on to "take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me." What is it the "that" Paul is so determined to take hold of?
3. Jim shared two reasons why we may have not yet finished the 35 Day Challenge:
  - I. Frustration and/or forgetfulness.
  - II. A perceived lack of benefit.

For those of us who have not yet finished, which one of these resonates with you? Why do you think that is?

4. What benefits have (or will) come from turning the 35 Day Challenge into a habitual pursuit of God?
5. How were the individual challenges (bodily discipline, applying the word of God, prayer, service and sacrifice) expressed in the life of Jesus? In turn, what do they tell us about what God considers to be important and meaningful in life?

## // Challenge

Let's take hold of the challenge to turn the last six week's teaching into the start of a new way of living closer to God. If you successfully finished, now turn it into a habit; if you quit, unquit!

Here's how you could do it:

- I. **Read** Jesus' teaching in Matthew 5-7, either in part or in its entirety, every day between now and the end of the year. If you miss a day, just pick it up the next day.

- II. If Flatirons is your home church, make a way to **give** 1% more of your income between now and the end of the year.
- III. If Flatirons is your home church, step up and **serve**. Join the teams who make church possible for everyone who walks through our doors, and for everyone who is yet to walk through our doors.